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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANGLO-JAPANESE ALLIANCE.

BY SENATOR JONATHAN P. DOLLIVER.

IN a recent essay Mr. Brooks Adams has emphasized the opinion that war is the final expression of commercial competition between nations, and, while his illustrations of the proposition are ponderous enough to seem conclusive, it is hardly credible that in the modern world the conflicting interests of trade may not be adjusted to promote the peace and prosperity of all. It cannot, however, be denied that the attitude of the great Powers, in their present dealings with China, presents in the last analysis a commercial question of universal importance. If there is not wisdom enough in the world to manage that question without inviting the waste and desolation of war, the boasted progress of mankind is more imaginary than real.

The interest of the people of the United States in the affairs of China is one that relates mainly to their opportunities to sell in that country the products of their factories and their farms. They make no pretence of any concern above others for the integrity of the Chinese territory, nor for the comfort and happiness of the imperial household. It is true that the voluntary missionary enterprises of the Christian churches of the United States have enlisted the enthusiasm of millions of our people in vast projects of philanthropy, which have for their ultimate object the regeneration of Asia.

But, so far as the government itself is concerned, there is little or nothing in its Chinese policy to warrant us in making any claim to motives higher than those which have actuated the people of other countries. Our interest in Asiatic problems does not arise from our new position in the Pacific Ocean. It antedates all that, beginning with the first American cargo which our merchants sold in China; and, if it is greater now than ever before,

it is not because we are occupying the Philippine archipelago, but because we have grown in these later years to the first rank as an exporting community. If any of our public men have thought that a true national statesmanship isolates us from the politics of the world, that notion has gone to pieces in the development of our foreign trade and our gradual conquest of all the market places of the earth.

It was at one time thought that, if we took care of our own boundaries, never looking beyond them, except to see how the Monroe Doctrine was coming on, it was about all that could be expected from a quiet and peaceful neighborhood. Such a philosophy of the national life has become an absurdity in the light of the current statistics of our trade with the world. It was inevitable that the United States should acquire a commercial interest, present and prospective, beyond all other peoples, in the vast territory to which the Pacific Ocean is the natural and convenient approach. Our acquisition of strategic islands in that ocean, however interesting from the military point of view, constitutes no part of our title to enter the market places of the Orient; and those who suppose that, in asserting our commercial rights on the other side of the world, we have cast away the national sense of duty which we inherited from our fathers, to guard with jealous care the development of free institutions in this hemisphere, comprehend neither the Monroe Doctrine, nor the higher laws of our commercial growth. The fact that we are under an historic obligation to take care of others near at hand, is not likely to interfere with the exercise of our right to take care of ourselves wherever we go down to the sea in ships.

It will be seen, therefore, that the people of the United States have good reason to look with anxiety upon the vicissitudes which have beset the Chinese Empire in the last few years.

The commercial invasion of China began with the enterprise of English merchants, long before any other country aspired to compete with them in the field of foreign commerce. It was accompanied with diplomatic formalities about concessions, treaty ports, and schemes of fiscal administration in which the outside world took only a languid interest. Because there were but few conflicting interests, the British monopoly of the Chinese trade hardly created a comment. It avoided the challenge of other nations for a still profounder reason, for wherever the British

authority and influence were set up, the commercial world had the assurance of fair play and equal rights.

It is only in these later years that the significance of Asia in the world's market place has attracted the attention of European statesmen. The marvellous development of industrial Germany has, in a sense, created the Chinese question from the standpoint of Europe; while the transformation of the backward tribal provinces of Japan into a parliamentary government with modern political and commercial aspirations has hastened the crisis in Asia. A still more tangible influence has operated to bring about the present situation. The long cherished purpose of Russia to find access to the Pacific Ocean in temperate latitudes, a purpose which may not have originally involved a greed of territory or a desire for dominion over alien races, has added a distinct impetus to the course of events.

In the summer of 1894, on account of disputes arising over affairs in Corea, Japan in declaring war upon China took a step which very greatly hastened the movement of the European world against the Chinese Empire. Prior to that time, the nations of Europe, while they had occasion to suspect that China was helpless in a military sense, did not know it with enough certainty to warrant the scheme of grand larceny which has since in a greater or less degree occupied their minds. But when the Island Empire, with its new ships and its new army modelled after European fashions, descended upon Manchuria, both by land and sea, and within a brief period disabled the Chinese fleet and sent its troops running for dear life in the direction of Peking, the cynical smile, which had for a long time been noticeable upon the faces of European statesmen, grew into an audible chuckle as they caught a glimpse of fresh opportunities to extend the blessings of civilization in China. The government of the Empress Dowager quickly perceived that the war with Japan was over, called in an American diplomatist who had often been a counsellor of the Empire, and concluded a treaty making peace with Japan. That treaty ceded to Japan that portion of the province of Feng T'ien which had been occupied by her forces, including the appurtenant islands near the northern shores of the Yellow Sea. This territory, in the hands of Japan, was expected by her to become a permanent barrier against the progress of Russia toward the Korean peninsula.

But before the ratifications of the treaty could be exchanged, the inexperienced government of Japan received its first formal introduction to Western diplomacy. She found herself confronted by a joint note, in which Russia, Germany, and France united, informing her that the peace of Asia required that there should be no territorial aggression against China, and suggesting in terms not easily misunderstood that, aside from the island of Formosa, a cash indemnity from her late enemy was the only fruit of her victory which she would be permitted to retain.

Great Britain did not join in this note, but, for some strange reason, by the lassitude of her silence, gave it the moral advantage of her apparent indifference; and, beginning with the Japanese Emperor's proclamation of May 10th, 1895, when his army took up its humiliating retreat from the peninsula district of northern China, with no spoils of war to speak of except 30,000,000 Kuping taels, the literature of diplomacy has become a bewildering parade of hypocrisy and gaseous pretences. Sir Henry Wotton, the quaint old English essayist, who in the autograph album of a friend described an ambassador as "an honest man sent to lie abroad for the commonwealth," would not find any necessity for revising his definition if he could have the opportunity to look over the shadowy correspondence that, for the past eight years, has been accumulating in the foreign offices of Europe.

Hardly had the back of Japan been turned, when the Russian government, which had pleaded the permanent peace of Asia as a reason for preserving the landmarks of the Chinese Empire, through agencies which were practically official, acquired concessions under the name of the Eastern Chinese Railway Company "for the construction and working of a railway within the confines of China, from one of the points on the western borders of the province of Hei-Lung-Kiang to one of the points on the eastern borders of the province of Kirin, and for the connection of this railway with those branches which the imperial Russian government will construct to the Chinese frontier from Trans-Baikalia and the Southern Ussuri lines"; the company also being empowered "to exploit, in connection with the railway or independently of it," coal mines or other enterprises industrial and commercial. Within less than two years, we find Russia pocketing a treaty with China, by which the Emperor agrees to lease to Russia Port Arthur, Ta-lien-wan, and the adjacent waters, and

such indefinite territory in the surrounding districts as might be subsequently agreed upon, and concluding with an extension of the railway concessions to include the construction of a line to Ta-lien-wan, or any other suitable point between Neuchwang and the mouth of the Yalu river.

Thus, this officious friend of the panic-stricken Chinese court, by a stroke of the most cheerful diplomacy ever before practised in this world, ousts the victorious armies of Japan, diverts the terminus of the Trans-Siberian railroad from Vladivostok to the genial climate of the Korean Bay, and literally takes possession of the industrial and commercial possibilities of northern China. In the whole transaction, only a single touch of sentiment can be discerned by the most acute observer, and that is where the traveller approaches a bend in the road, as the locomotive turns aside from the grave-yard which contains the dust of the founders of the imperial dynasty, reposing there, in a slumber hardly more profound than that of their royal descendants at Peking.

In order to show that this sudden contradiction in the attitude of Russia towards China was merely a part of the programme talked over by the three remonstrants against the aggressive purposes of Japan, we have only to notice the appearance within a month of the German fleet in the same waters, looking for satisfaction for the murder of an unfortunate missionary, and somewhat ostentatiously vindicating the Christian religion by extorting from His Majesty, the Emperor of China, the practical sovereignty of an indefinite zone surrounding the bay of Kiao Chow, including a ninety-nine years lease of both sides of the entrance to the harbor, which commands the Province of Shantung.

Almost at the same time, we find the French ambassador holding up the Tsung-li-Yamen on three propositions; first, a railway concession from the frontier of Tonking to Yunnan-Fu; second, a lease by the Chinese government, "in consideration of its friendship for France," of the bay of Kwang-Chow-Wan for a naval and coaling station; third, the right to intervene in the reorganization of the postal service of China. And within one day after receiving M. Dubail's interesting despatch, the Chinese government replies in these words, helpless and hopeless in their pathetic brevity: "As it is said in the despatch which you addressed to our Yamen that these three requests are destined to draw closer the bonds of friendship which unite us, we are able to acquiesce in

them. China and France ought to strengthen the good relations which exist between them, and avert forever any cause for conflict."

In the meantime, the British government begins to show signs of awakening. On February 9th, 1898, Sir Claude MacDonald asks and secures renewed assurances of China that she will not, under any condition, alienate "the Yangtze region," now entirely hers, "to any other Power," "whether under lease, mortgage, or other designation." And on the first of July following, Great Britain, having made up her mind to keep in the procession, takes a lease by agreement with China of the port of Wei-Hai-Wei, including the adjacent waters, islands, and mainland, to be subject to her sole jurisdiction "for so long a period as Port Arthur shall remain in the occupation of Russia."

These transactions by no means complete the list of the incursions against the sovereignty of China, conducted by those over-advertised friends of the peace of Asia. It must, however, be said for Great Britain that her movement of July 1st, following some time after the other treaties, so-called, were negotiated, was evidently intended to secure a point of hostile observation, not so much in the direction of China, as against those nations which had taken advantage of her infirmities; for, whatever else may be said of the English government, there are few who will deny that it possesses too much wisdom to confuse the development of commerce with the impossible task of undertaking to colonize the interior of China.

It will be seen at once that a national government administered thus, without either sense or patriotism, its territory parcelled out to smooth-spoken conspirators who appeared unctuously on the scene to save the empire from the Japanese invader, would naturally lose the respect of its own people, and especially of that portion of the people which had been educated, however crudely, to the profession of arms or other athletic sports.

In view of what happened after the evacuation of Manchuria by Japan, the popular insurrection of 1900, directed in blind fury against all strangers within the confines of the empire, will appear to the discriminating historian very much less offensive than it seemed at the time. That pitiful outcry of enraged patriotism represents to-day the saving remnant of the Chinese people. If all these things could have happened, if an imbecile administra-

tion could have gone on distributing the sea ports of the country as the avarice and self-interest of other nations might suggest, without calling forth an outbreak of popular wrath, then indeed the only thing China would be entitled to under the law of nations would have been a *post-mortem* examination. Curiously enough, the riots of 1900, involving the diplomatic representatives of all the Powers, the missionaries of all faiths, and merchants and travellers from every land, rendered China an immeasurable service, by bringing the Powers face to face in her capital, and compelling an open adjustment of their accounts.

The movement of the allied Powers for the relief of the besieged legations at Peking gave the first occasion to the government of the United States to define its policy in China. Fortunately, our squadron on that station was in command of an experienced and capable officer, Rear-Admiral Louis Kempff, and it has seldom fallen to an American naval commander to deal with questions so difficult without an opportunity to seek instructions. The old sailor had to decide the question himself, and he did it with a wisdom so profound and a moral courage so superb, as to give his name a conspicuous place in the history of the American navy.

He declined to join in the bombardment of the Taku forts, because we were at peace with China and constrained by a traditional policy which avoids foreign alliances; and from that time, whatever the United States did in China, though we operated in harmony with the other Powers, was done upon our own responsibility and without motives inimical to the Chinese Empire.

The position taken by our fleet was promptly reinforced by Mr. Hay's circular note to all the Powers, dated July 3rd, 1900, in which he sets forth in plain terms the purpose of President McKinley in sending a detachment of American troops for the rescue of our beleaguered citizens, and made a definite statement of the purpose of the government of the United States to aid in preserving "Chinese territorial and administrative entity," and to "safeguard for the world the principle of equal and impartial trade with all parts of the Chinese Empire."

The disinterested attitude of the United States was represented in the most generous way to the Chinese government by Mr. Wu Ting-fang, its able and accomplished minister at Washington ;

and as early as July 19th, the President of the United States found himself called upon by the Emperor of China's foreign office "to take the initiative in bringing about a concert of the Powers for the restoration of order and peace."

It is not too much to say that the United States has ever since had not only the confidence of China, but of all other interested Powers, for the reason that we seek no advantage over others, and entertain no designs against her sovereignty. We have still further invited the confidence of mankind by taking the earliest possible steps, after the safety of our citizens in China was assured, to anticipate the joint obligation of the Powers to withdraw their troops, and by wise counsel aid that disordered empire in re-establishing its authority.

The mutual suspicions of the European Powers, after the Peking expedition had ended, was well illustrated by the joint agreement between Germany and England, dated October, 20th, in which, after asserting the equal rights of the world in "the commercial and economic activities of China," they especially disclaimed the motive of making use of the unsettled state of affairs there "to obtain for themselves any territorial advantages in the Chinese dominions," and expressed their intention to act together for the protection of their own interests, should other Powers fail to observe these principles. All interested nations were asked to express their approval of the doctrines stated in this agreement, and it evidently afforded Mr. Hay satisfaction, in stating the adherence of the United States, to recall his correspondence of the previous year with France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and Japan, as well as his circular of July 3rd, 1900, in which he had sought a written pledge from all these nations that, whatever happened in China, no nation should ever suffer the wrong involved in discriminating customs duties, unequal transportation rates, or other servitudes in their commerce with the people of China.

It is, however, to be noted that, while the other Powers acquiesced in Secretary Hay's broad and comprehensive statement of the rights of all, the Russian Foreign Office, by an oversight that could hardly have been unintentional, omitted any reference to the question of uniform railway rates within the territory already pre-empted by her in northern China, and made no comment whatever on the question suggested by Mr. Hay's note as to other treaty rights within the Russian sphere of influence.

contenting itself with a nebulous expression about the "open door," and a brief reference to the recent creation of a free port at Ta-lien-wan. These omissions were all the more suggestive, in view of the unconcealed preparation of Russia to perpetuate the military occupation of Manchuria.

It did not require very deep insight into the situation to inform Japan and the other nations, which had been wasting their official stationery in diplomatic correspondence, that, with a Russian army in possession of Manchuria, a Russian bank administering its finances, a Russian mining company claiming its natural resources, and a Russian railway system monopolizing its means of transportation, the Chinese Empire was already effectually dismembered, and the rights of the world's commerce already subjected to the selfish interest of a single Power. Long before the beginning of the present year, the legations at Peking had grown more weary of watching one another than they had been of watching the common enemy in the dark days of the Boxer siege; and it became evident that a definite statement of international rights was due to the whole world. The Chinese administration remained plastic in the hands of the Russian Embassy, and treaty after treaty confirming Russian pretensions was made, only to be torn up on the protest of indignant Powers, until on the 30th of January the London government took a step of far-reaching interest to the world at large. It entered into an agreement with the Empire of Japan, with the object of maintaining "the general peace of the extreme East," and especially "the independence and territorial integrity of the Empire of China, and the Empire of Corea, and equal opportunities in these countries for the commerce and industry of all nations."

The first four articles of this treaty are as follows, and the simplicity and directness of its language are such that little room is left for explanation:

"Article I. The High Contracting Parties, having mutually recognized the independence of China and Corea, declare themselves to be entirely uninfluenced by any aggressive tendencies in either country. Having in view, however, their special interests, of which those of Great Britain relate principally to China, while Japan, in addition to the interests which she possesses in China, is interested in a peculiar degree politically as well as commercially and industrially in Corea, the High Contracting Parties recognize that it will be admissible for either of them to take such measures as may be indispensable in order to safe-

guard those interests, if threatened, either by the aggressive action of any other Power, or by disturbances arising in China or Corea, and necessitating the intervention of either of the High Contracting Parties for the protection of the lives and property of its subjects.

"Article II. If either Great Britain or Japan, in the defence of their respective interests as above described, should become involved in war with another Power, the other High Contracting Power will maintain a strict neutrality and use its best efforts to prevent other Powers from joining in hostilities against its ally.

"Article III. If, in the above event, any other Power or Powers should join in hostilities against that ally, the other High Contracting Power will come to its assistance, and will conduct the war in common and make peace in mutual agreement with it.

"Article IV. The High Contracting Parties agree that neither of them will, without consulting the other, enter into separate arrangements with another Power to the prejudice of the interests above described."

The immediate effect of the announcement of this treaty was to bring the whole world to its senses. Contemporaneously with its publication, our State Department sent a memorandum both to Peking and St. Petersburg, asserting in plain terms that the situation in Manchuria was a distinct breach of the stipulations of treaties between China and foreign Powers, not only damaging the rights of American citizens by exposing them to discriminations, but tending also to cripple the Chinese Empire in the discharge of its international obligations. The terms of this memorandum indicate that it was written with the text of the Anglo-Japanese treaty within easy reach.

The concert of Europe responded to the publication of the treaty with a composure so grave as to appear almost comical. Everybody, including the Russian official press, said it contained exactly the idea they had long cherished. That is apparently so, so far as Germany is concerned, and even France is upon record in her correspondence with the United States to the same effect. So far as the Russian government is concerned, no assurances or other evidence either in word or deed have ever been given except in respect to the freedom of the new port of Ta-lien-wan. So that it is not strange that, as soon as the ministry at St. Petersburg recovered from its surprise, it announced in a memorandum communicated to our government by the Imperial Embassy, imperfectly if not incorrectly stating the scope of the Japanese treaty, that the allied governments of Russia and France held to the principles of that treaty as the basis of their own policy, "and

at the same time a guarantee for their special interests in the Far East." They added, however, an almost undisguised challenge to Japan by saying in effect that, if war occurred, all parties might as well get ready for a two-Power fight.

The terms in which our government received the memorandum of March 3rd, submitted by the Russian ambassador, ought to leave no doubt in the minds of the Powers of Europe that the interests of the United States are identical with those of the nations which stand ready to defend the equality of commercial rights both in the ports of China and along the highways of her internal traffic. We too stand for the independence of China and Corea; we too are interested in the access of our enterprising citizens to the mines and forests of that empire; we too understand that the "open door" is a meaningless phrase with foreign armies occupying the interior, and foreign railway companies subjecting our merchandise to the burdens of extortion and discrimination; and it may as well be understood now as at a later time that no possible alliance, in Europe or out of it, will deter the United States from effectually maintaining the principle of fair play in the commercial development of the Orient.

It would be as well, therefore, for both Russia and France to study with some care the comment of Secretary Hay upon the concluding paragraph of their joint memorandum of March 3rd, in which the government of the United States "reserves for itself entire liberty of action, should circumstances arise whereby the policy and interests of the United States in China and Corea might be disturbed or impaired."

Nor is it necessary, when interests so momentous are at stake, to conceal the fact that the people of the United States are apt to lose patience with such expressions of contemptuous gayety as were indulged in by Count von Bülow in the Reichstag, on the third of March, as reported in the *London Times* of the next day. The Imperial Chancellor appears even yet to look upon China as a pudding waiting for the knife. "We do not in the least," he says, "want to have an extra helping of pudding in China, but we ask for the same helping which the others get." If the first minister of the German Crown cannot rise above a cheap levity like that, in speaking for the most sober-minded nation of the world, it is to be hoped that there are other functionaries in Berlin who will take the pains to read carefully the American Sec-

retary's answer to the joint note of the Allied Powers who have taken most to heart the new treaty between England and Japan

There can be no disparagement of the historic friendship between the government of Russia and the people of the United States, and there are few who do not welcome the recent agreement of that government with China by which provision is made for the prompt evacuation of Manchuria by the Russian army. Our people indulge also the expectation that distinct assurance will be no longer withheld, that Russia claims no privileges within Chinese territory to which the commercial world is not admitted on the same terms.

It is already obvious that, whatever the defects of the Chinese government may be, it is the only government adapted to that vast and strange population. To disturb that empire, to wantonly separate its provinces from the régime to which they have been accustomed through the inheritance of centuries, would be an act of criminal folly for which no nation can afford to take the responsibility. The world ought to help China, and lend its influence to the gradual readjustment of its political mechanism to the needs of times to which its old forms are no longer adapted.

Even to-day its market place offers an inviting field to the enterprises of commerce; but the sum total of its present foreign trade is as nothing compared to the demand for the world's merchandise when that people shall have been caught, as it one day will be, in the currents of modern progress. The people of the United States are not unmindful of their present share in the trade of China. They do not intend to see that cut off, nor in any wise unjustly constrained; but they are looking to the future.

As the result of a conflict with Spain in which they had absolutely no motive except the welfare of others, they find themselves very near to the coasts of Asia; they propose to open headquarters there for the transaction of business. They expect to see the Chinese Empire one day aroused from the sleep of ages; and under the guidance of a Secretary of State who in the lifetime of William McKinley shared in a peculiar measure the confidence of that great President, they have cast in their lot with those who, in the interest of the peace of the world and the plain rights of trade and industry, propose to defend that ancient Empire against either spoliation or anarchy.

JONATHAN P. DOLLIVER.